

And I say that because the Tulia 12 has just been freed in the State of Texas, and I want to announce to this Congress that the Committee on the Judiciary, I hope, will be holding investigatory hearings on what happened to hold those individuals when there was no basis and a sense of a lack of fairness in the judicial system. We want to make sure that the Tulia 12 will be free for all America to know, and we expect to hold those hearings.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we want to acknowledge that we are still fighting for that relationship of equality and so Juneteenth becomes more important because the Supreme Court will render its decision in the next week on the question of affirmative action, the right of equality and access to opportunity in this country, and I pray that Juneteenth will be commemorated in reality by a decision that upholds the University of Michigan's case.

Mr. Speaker, I close by acknowledging those in my home district tonight as I speak on the floor of the House celebrating Juneteenth, Representative Al Edwards for his great work on making this a holiday; Reverend Greg Patrick of South West Community Church helping to put on this great event celebrating Juneteenth; and Reverend C. Anderson Davis and Mrs. Bertha Davis, our historic and wonderful senior citizens who helped bring the celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation to Texas for all these many years. I thank them and may the celebration live on by the words "we shall overcome."

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of the joyous celebration of Juneteenth. For those of you who ask, "What is Juneteenth," I will tell you. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19 that the Union soldiers, led by the courageous Major General Gordon Granger, landed in Galveston, Texas with news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were now free. The Emancipation Proclamation became official on January 1, 1863. Nevertheless, aside from the sad fact the people were already in a state of bondage, they had to wait two and a half years after President Lincoln's proclamation, to hear the news.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak about Juneteenth and I would like to share with you the letter that Major General Gordon Granger read to the emotion filled slaves. It reads as follows:

"The People of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer."

Prior to June 19, 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops available to enforce the new Executive order. Thanks to the meritorious Major Granger and the arrival of his troops, there were forces strong enough to overcome the resistance and to free the slaves.

Many stories have been told about the actual reason for why it took so long for the

news of the Emancipation to reach Galveston, but it is very difficult to say which one is true. The fact still remains that the news did not come to the enslaved Texans soon enough. The reactions to the profound news ranged from pure shock to immediate jubilation.

Upon hearing the news, many of the newly freed slaves went north and others went to neighboring states, such as Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. For those freed men and women, recounting the memories and festivities of that great day in June of 1865 served as motivation as well as a release from the growing pressures encountered in their new territory. The celebration of June 19th was coined "Juneteenth" and it grew with more participation from descendants. The Juneteenth celebration was a time for reassuring one another, for praying and for gathering with family members. This still holds true today because African Americans continue to face many challenges that call for prayer and gathering together with one's family and community.

When the celebration of Juneteenth originated, a range of activities were offered to entertain the masses, many of which continue in tradition today. Rodeos, fishing, barbecuing and baseball are just a few of the typical Juneteenth activities that one may witness or participate in today. One of the more popular activities during Juneteenth celebrations is barbecuing, through which Juneteenth celebrants can share in the spirit and aromas that their ancestors would have experienced during these festivities. For this reason, the barbecue pit is often established as the center of attention at Juneteenth celebrations, and you can smell the sweet smells of barbecue in the air in Houston and in many other areas.

The history of Juneteenth celebrations has its ups and downs. The downs came in the early 1900s when classrooms did very little to teach about Juneteenth. However the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s did much to revive the celebrations due to widespread protests and marches for freedom. On January 1, 1980, Juneteenth became an official state holiday in Texas, largely through the efforts of Al Edwards, an African American state legislator. The passage of the bill was especially significant because it marked Juneteenth as the first emancipation celebration granted official state recognition. Texans had been among the last to hear of the Emancipation but we were the first to distinguish it as a state holiday.

Throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and into the new millennium, Juneteenth has continued to enjoy a growing and healthy interest from communities and organizations throughout the county. The future of Juneteenth looks bright as the number of cities and states come on board and form local committees and organizations to coordinate celebratory activities.

Today, Juneteenth celebrates African American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures. I appreciate the opportunity to speak about this joyous celebration. I wish a very happy Juneteenth to all.

Further, Mr. Speaker I want to salute Rev. C. Anderson Davis and his wife Bertha Davis for their dedicated determined efforts and honoring and celebrating Juneteenth—and their support of the Houston National Emancipation Association.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COMMITMENT TO WORLD PEACE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my commitment to world peace and to stress the importance of establishing dialogue and understanding among all people. It is in recognition of this need that on Tuesday, June 24, at 6:30 p.m. in the Rayburn Room B338-340, the American Leadership Initiative will hold a special awards ceremony to honor great Americans from all 50 States who have demonstrated a commitment to peace. Many of my colleagues will join me and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), co-chair, in giving tribute to some of the outstanding Americans from our districts. Members of the clergy, legislators, educators, business and community leaders will be among those honored with the "Ambassadors for Peace Award-Excellence in Leadership." These committed citizens have been working to renew and strengthen our families and marriages, restore our communities, and rebuild our Nation and indeed our world. We are grateful to the founders of Ambassadors for Peace, the Reverend and Mrs. Sun Myung, for promoting the vision of world peace, and we commend them for their work.

These Ambassadors for Peace have become increasingly effective and relevant in their communities since the tragedy of 9-11. They have been working together to promote understanding among all faiths, particularly with Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders. With the realization that many of the tensions currently facing the world cannot be addressed without consideration of the religious implications involved, the Ambassadors for Peace have formed an American Interreligious Council. This council seeks to support and advise our Nation's leaders concerning the issues and challenges of seeking lasting peace. The American Interreligious Council is also part of the effort to create an international council of religious leaders. The members of this council will support the leaders of the United Nations as they work to resolve conflicts throughout the world. This body will provide a direct link between international leaders and the various religious peoples in their constituencies. This will help to ensure that peace agreements are embraced by the diverse communities these leaders represent.

Today, though crisis is at our doorstep, we must maintain an unwavering hope for peace. It has become clear that the establishment of a lasting peace throughout the world will only